UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
Basic Officer Course
The Basic School
Marine Corps Combat Development Command
Quantico, Virginia 22134-5019

B0354

OFFENSIVE FUNDAMENTALS I

PART I

Student Handout

"I approve of all methods of attacking provided they are directed at the point where the enemy's army is weakest and where the terrain favors them the least."

- Frederick the Great: Instructions for His Generals, 1747.

1.   **INTRODUCTION.** The Marine Corps' philosophy of warfighting is based upon an approach to war called Maneuver Warfare. In several previous classes the tenets of maneuver warfare and their applicability on the platoon and company level were discussed. This class will focus on the fundamental concepts of offensive operations, which, when applied in concert with basic Maneuver Warfare concepts, enable us to fight intelligently.

2.   **FUNDAMENTALS OF OFFENSIVE TACTICS.** The eleven fundamentals of offensive tactics, like the Principles of War, have evolved over time and serve as a conceptual aid during the planning and conduct of offensive operations. Though the fundamentals of offensive tactics have changed little during the past several decades, they must be considered in relation to our maneuver warfighting philosophy, the capabilities of modern weapon systems and the current technology. These fundamentals are not meant to be an all-inclusive check list for use during combat operations! One will recognize that many of these fundamentals are discussed in MCDP 1 *Warfighting* and MCDP 1-3 *Tactics* and are easily applied to the concept of maneuver warfare. The fundamentals of the offense are:

        a.   Gain and maintain contact. In order to defeat the enemy or destroy his will to fight, a commander's first priority must be to locate and gain contact with the enemy. Contact may vary from actual combat to merely observing the enemy. The contact provides us with information pertaining to the enemy's location, disposition, and movement--this is a potentially decisive advantage that must not be lost.

        b.   Develop the situation. Developing the situation is closely related to gaining and maintaining contact. It consists of those actions taken to determine the strength, composition, and disposition of the enemy. Information gained from these actions assists the commander in developing his plan.

        c.   Exploit known enemy weaknesses. The attacker avoids enemy strength and attacks his weaknesses (surfaces and gaps). Significant enemy weaknesses that can be exploited are:

                (1)   Predictable operating patterns(5)   Inability to conduct sustained operations.
                (2)   Tactical errors, lack of preparations   (6)   Poor morale, health, etc.
                (3)   Lack of fire support, aviation assets, antiair, etc. (7)   Cultural/religious/social constraints.
                (4)   Technological inferiority, lack of mobility   (8)   Numerical inferiority, lack of mutual support

        d.   Concentrate superior combat power at the decisive time and place. The attacker masses combat power at the decisive place and time. (MASS)

        e.   Seize or control key terrain. Although in maneuver warfare the focus is predominantly on the enemy, there are still situations when a unit leader seeks to utilize terrain which, if intelligently exploited, will give a decisive advantage over the enemy. Remember, maneuver warfare means fighting smart; choosing when and where to fight. Judicious use of terrain is inherent in maneuver warfare.

        f.   Gain and retain the initiative. The unit leader seizes and retains the initiative in order to dictate the terms of the

battle instead of reacting to the actions of the enemy. (OODA loop - Boyd Cycle, tempo)

       g.   <u>Neutralize the enemy's ability to react</u>. The attacker makes every effort to disrupt and degrade the enemy's ability to react to the attacker's scheme of maneuver. The attacker neutralizes enemy capabilities by:

        (1)   Degrading enemy command and control capabilities.   (4)   Intelligent use of technology.

        (2)   Use of combined arms.   (5)   Use of deception and security measures.

        (3)   Avoiding predictable reactions to enemy actions. (6)   Exploiting enemy weaknesses.

       h.   <u>Advance by fire and maneuver</u>. Fire and maneuver is a method of attack in which one unit advances while supported by the fires of another unit(s).

       i.   <u>Maintain momentum</u>. Momentum is maintained through the continued application of combat power against enemy forces. The goal is to prevent the enemy from reorganizing or escaping.

       j.   <u>Exploit success</u>. A successful attack should be pressed relentlessly to prevent the enemy from recovering from the initial shock and reconstituting a cohesive defense or launching a counterattack.

       k.   <u>Provide for the security of the force</u>. One of the unit leader's most important responsibilities! Continually assess the security requirements for your unit and ensure they are adequately met. Failure to do this will inevitably lead to defeat, loss of life, or both. Security measures are normally grouped into two categories: active and passive.

3.   **THE PURPOSES OF OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS.** Infantry units normally undertake offensive operations for the following reasons:

       a.   Destroy enemy forces and equipment.   d. Gain information.

       b.   Deceive and divert the enemy.   e. Fix the enemy in place.

       c.   Deprive the enemy of resources.   f.   Disrupt enemy actions or preparations.

4.   **THE PHASES OF THE ATTACK.** For <u>conceptual and instructional purposes</u> offensive operations are broken down into three phases. The three phases are: PREPARATION, CONDUCT, and CONSOLIDATION/EXPLOITATION. Usually, the phases will overlap, with victory or defeat often hinging upon how quickly a unit transitions from one phase to another. As units transition from one phase to the next, the unit leader must constantly assess the actions of the enemy and make appropriate adjustments to his plan. These phases are not to be considered as distinct entities. Though they are inherent in most offensive operations, they are rarely referred to by name in operation orders, nor is there always a definable separation between them.

Figure 1. Phases of the offense

       a.   <u>Preparation phase</u>. This phase typically begins with the receipt of a warning order or mission.

        (1)   Troop leading steps (BAMCIS)   (4) Movement to assembly area

        (2)   Estimate of the situation (METT-T)   (5) Movement to attack position or line of

        (3)   Coordination with other units   departure

       b.   <u>Conduct phase</u>. This phase normally begins with the crossing of the line of departure (LD), and continues through the objective.

        (1)   Line of departure passing through the assault position   (4) Advance by fire and movement

        (2)   Movement toward the objective   (5)   Actions on the objective

        (3)   Contact with the enemy   (6)   Consolidation and reorganization

       c.   <u>Consolidation/Exploitation phase</u>. This phase commences with the capture of the assigned objective and <u>may</u> involve the exploitation of momentum and success achieved during the attack through physical pursuit of the enemy.

        (1)   Establish hasty defense (develop as time allows) (6)   Treat/evacuate WIAs and EPWs

        (2)   Expect an enemy counterattack   (7)   Pursue the enemy through direct and indirect

    (3)   Reestablish command and control   fires

    (4)   Position key weapons   (8) Consider exploitation (physical pursuit)

    (5)   Redistribute ammunition and equipment   (9) Arrange for resupply

5.   **FIRE AND MANEUVER AND FIRE AND MOVEMENT**

    a.   <u>Fire and maneuver</u>. Fire and maneuver is a technique of advance in which one element (the maneuver element) moves while being supported by another element (the support by fire element). <u>A SEPARATE AND DISTINCT MISSION IS ASSIGNED TO EACH ELEMENT</u>.

    b.   <u>Fire and movement</u>. Fire and movement is a technique of advance in which elements and individuals within the maneuver element provide suppressive fire and move by bounds. Elements and individuals alternate the firing and moving so that <u>movement is always covered by fire</u> and the assault's momentum is retained.

6.   **CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS.** It usually consists of a scheme of maneuver and a fire support plan. It is based on the leader's estimate of the situation (METT-T).

    a.   <u>Fire support plan</u>. The fire support plan integrates direct and indirect fires into the scheme of maneuver in order to achieve a desired effect on known and suspected enemy positions in support of the maneuver element.

    b.   <u>Scheme of maneuver</u>. The scheme of maneuver is the unit leader's plan for employing his subordinate, attached, and supporting units in order to accomplish the mission. The unit leader considers several key items during his development of a scheme of maneuver:

    (1)   <u>Distribution of forces</u>. One way a unit leader can influence the course of action is through the distribution of forces into a <u>MAIN EFFORT, SUPPORTING EFFORT(S), and a RESERVE</u>. By properly distributing his forces, the unit leader achieves superiority at the decisive time and place. This also gives the attacker flexibility by maintaining the minimum necessary forces elsewhere to accomplish supporting tasks.

    (a)   <u>Main effort</u>. The commander provides the bulk of his combat power to the main effort to maintain momentum and ensure accomplishment of the mission. The main effort is provided with the greatest mobility and the preponderance of combat support and combat service support. The main effort is the commander's bid for victory. (FMFM 6)

    (b)   <u>Supporting effort.</u> "A supporting effort is an offensive operation carried out in conjunction with a main effort and is designed to achieve one or more of the following:

    <u>1</u>   Deceive the enemy as to the location of the main effort.

    <u>2</u>   Destroy or fix enemy forces which could interfere with the main effort.

    <u>3</u>   Control terrain whose occupation by the enemy will hinder the main effort.

    <u>4</u>   Force the enemy to commit reserves prematurely or in an indecisive area.

    (c)   <u>Reserve</u>. The primary mission of the reserve is to enter offensive action at the proper place and moment to accomplish the assigned mission or exploit success. (FMFM 6-4)

    <u>1</u>   <u>Although infantry squads and platoons normally do not withhold a reserve, they may be designated as the reserve for a larger unit, or as an element of a larger unit which has been designated as a reserve</u>. For example, a squad or rifle platoon may be designated as the reserve for a rifle company; a rifle company may be designated as the reserve for an infantry battalion, etc.

    <u>2</u>   The primary purpose of the reserve is to attack at the critical time and place to ensure the victory or exploit success. <u>The commander designating the reserve is responsible for its employment</u>. The use of a reserve is most effective when it is committed at a decisive point and time in an engagement and when used to exploit the successful actions of other elements in the unit, rather than attempting to reinforce unsuccessful actions.

    <u>3</u>   When the reserve is committed, it should be employed as an entire unit and not tasked out in a piece-meal fashion. For example, if a rifle platoon is the reserve for a rifle company, the company commander will normally employ the reserve as a platoon instead of sending the three squads at various times.

<u>4</u>   Once the reserve is committed, the commander should reconstitute a reserve. The tactical situation may not allow this or may not require it. <u>However, a commander without a reserve at his disposal lacks flexibility during subsequent operations and must adjust his plans accordingly</u>.

(2)   <u>Forms of offensive maneuver</u>

(a)   <u>General</u>. Offensive maneuver is the movement made to place forces in an advantageous position relative to the enemy, to close with him, and to defeat him. Although maneuver is made in relation to the enemy, the ability to maneuver is closely related to battlefield initiative. The initiative lies with the attacker so long as he retains freedom of action to select the time and place of the engagement. In the final analysis, the tactical advantage being sought through maneuver is the disposition of the friendly force in such a manner as to facilitate the defeat of the enemy.

<u>1</u>   The unit leader may direct his attack to the front, flank, or rear of the enemy. Helicopterborne operations that place forces on the enemy's flank or to his rear can be used during all forms of maneuver.

<u>2</u>   METT-T is used to determine the best form of maneuver.

<u>3</u>   Terrain heavily influences the selection of the form of maneuver at the company and platoon level. The interrelationship of terrain features, particularly their relationship to the enemy, will directly affect the commander's ability to employ his combat power efficiently.

(b)   <u>Frontal attack</u>. A frontal attack is directed against the front of an enemy force. The attack's goal is to achieve a penetration. <u>The frontal attack generally is the least preferred form of maneuver because it strikes the enemy where he is strongest</u>. A supporting attack and supporting arms may be used in order to suppress the enemy. A frontal attack may be appropriate for overrunning a weak or disorganized enemy, during a pursuit, or for fixing an enemy in place. (See Figure 2).
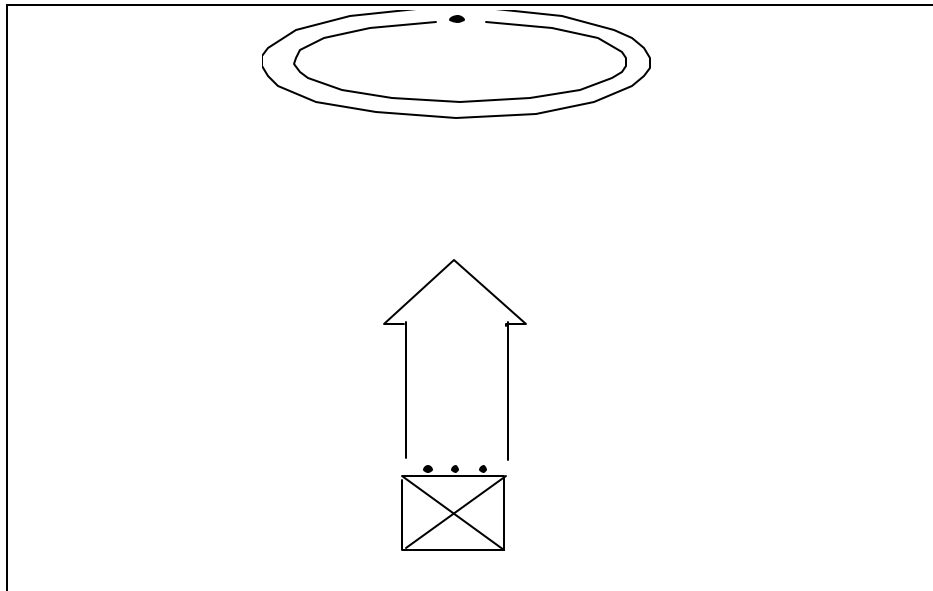

Figure 2. Frontal attack

(c)   <u>Flanking attack</u>. A flanking attack is an offensive maneuver directed at the flank of an enemy. A flanking attack seeks to strike the enemy from an unexpected direction--achieving a degree of surprise, and avoiding the enemy's principal orientation of his main weapons systems. A flanking attack usually (but not always) involves a supporting attack in order to suppress the enemy. Direct and indirect fires can be used to suppress the enemy and prevent his maneuvering against the flanking force. A reconnaissance of the enemy positions enhances the attacker's ability to identify and avoid automatic weapons, key obstacles and mines.
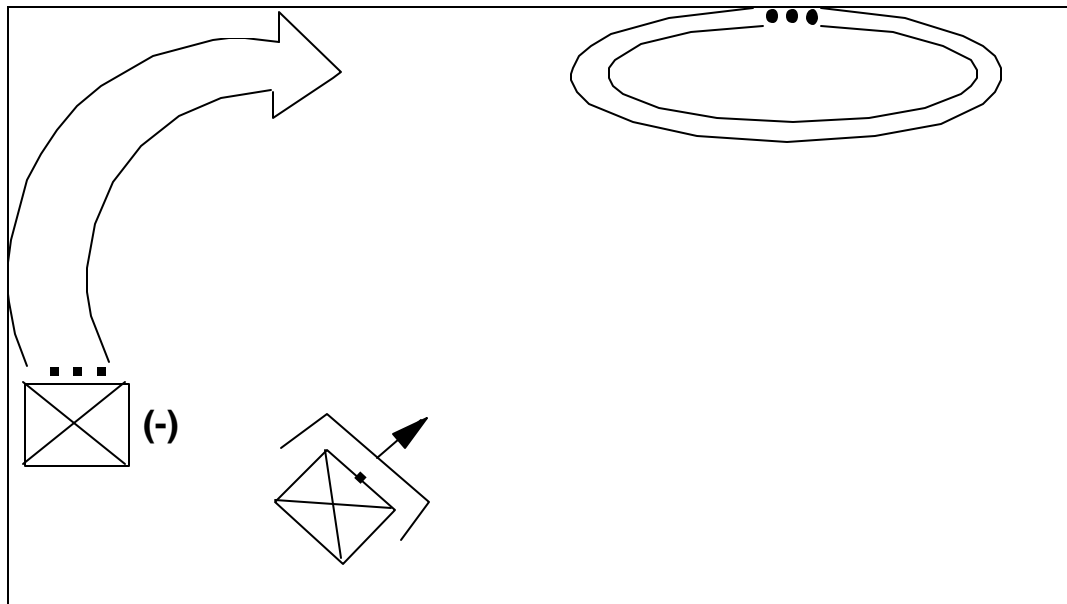
Figure 3. Flanking attack

        (d)   Envelopment. An envelopment is an offensive maneuver in which the attacking force passes around or over (heliborne) the enemy's principal defensive positions to attack those positions from the rear, or secure other high value objectives to the enemy's rear. Rifle platoons and companies normally do not conduct envelopments; rather they may participate as an element of a larger unit conducting one. An envelopment generally seeks to bypass the enemy's strength and strike him where he is weakest, sever his lines of communication, disrupt his command and control or his combat service support elements, and forces the enemy to fight on a reverse or unexpected front. An envelopment, like the flanking attack, normally involves a supporting effort to fix the enemy's attention to his front, forcing the enemy to fight in two or more directions simultaneously. The success of an envelopment often depends heavily on the supporting effort to fix the enemy in place.
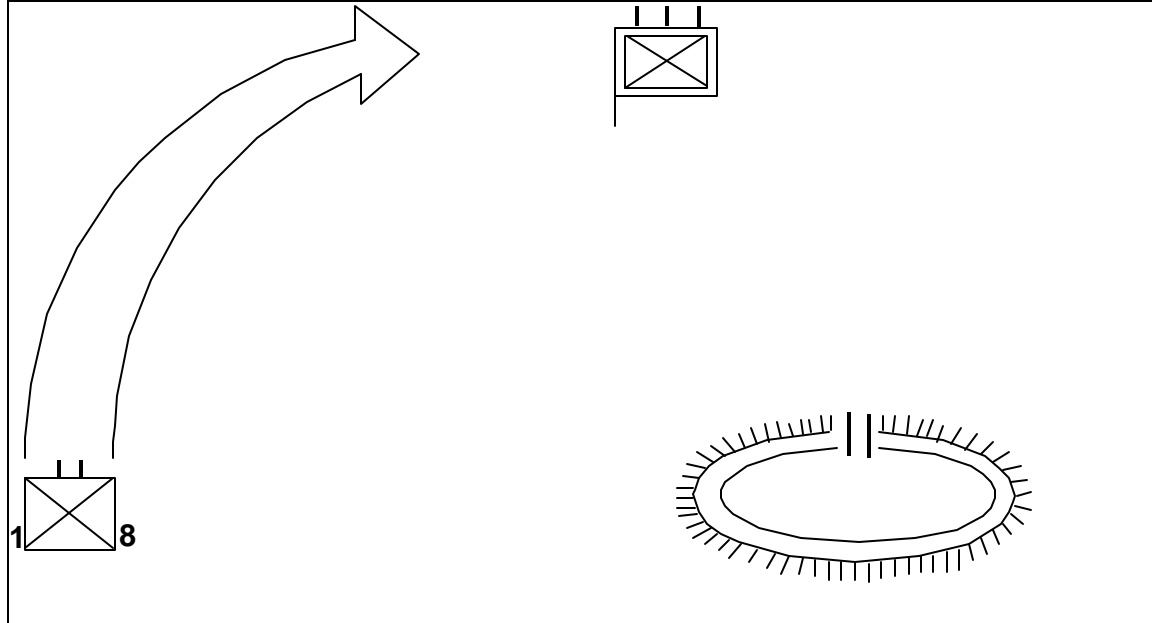

Figure 4. Envelopment

        (3)   Formations*. Formations are defined as the grouping of individuals and units for efficient tactical employment. Combat formations possess the following characteristics in varying degrees:

        (a)   Security. Security refers to the fact that one particular formation may provide better security in a certain direction than another formation.

        (b)   Speed. Speed refers to the relative ease or difficulty of movement that one formation

provides when compared to another.

        (c)   <u>Control</u>. Control refers to the degree to which the formation assists the leader in maintaining positive control over the unit.

        (d)   <u>Flexibility</u>. Flexibility refers to the ability of the unit leader to shift his combat power or to change the formation to a more appropriate one.

        (e)   <u>Firepower</u>. Firepower refers to the ability to orient and fire weapons in any direction from a particular formation.

*While formations are considered during the development of the scheme of maneuver, they are specified to subordinates in coordinating instructions, and may be changed as required during any phase of offensive operations.

        (4)   <u>Plan for consolidation</u>. Consolidation is the organization of a newly captured objective and <u>includes the reorganization of the attacking unit and the transition from offensive actions to a defensive posture</u>. The unit leader considers consolidation plans when formulating his scheme of maneuver.

        (5)   <u>Continuation of the attack</u>. When an attack is planned to continue beyond the initial objective, the unit leader plans for this while developing the initial plan of attack. Preliminary planning reduces the time required for transitioning from the capture of the initial objective to the assault of subsequent objective(s). Plans for beyond the initial objective must be adaptable in the event of changing or unforeseen circumstances, and can be altered through the issuance of fragmentary orders.

        (6)   <u>Security</u>

        (a)   The security of a unit is the responsibility of the unit leader. Active and passive security measures should be implemented to guard against possible enemy air and ground action.

        (b)   The unit leader enhances unit security during all phases of offensive operations through the selection of appropriate formations and movement techniques (appropriate to the enemy threat).

        (7)   <u>Control</u>. When developing the scheme of maneuver, plans for integrating and coordinating the actions of all subordinate elements are considered. Various techniques enhance the unit leader's ability to control and coordinate elements during an attack. Several of these techniques are:

        (a)   Use of clear, concise orders
        (b)   Tactical control measures
        (c)   Fire support coordination measures
        (d)   Signals
        (e)   Unit SOPs

<u>**OFFENSIVE FUNDAMENTALS I**</u>
PART II

"Since I first joined the Marines, I have advocated aggressiveness in the field and constant offensive action. Hit quickly, hit hard and keep right on hitting. Give the enemy no rest, no opportunity to consolidate his forces and hit back at you. This is the shortest road to victory."

- General H.M "Howling Mad" Smith, 1949.

1.   **TYPES OF OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS.** There are four general types of offensive operations: movement to contact, attack, exploitation, and pursuit. Though described in a logical or notional sequence, these operations may occur in any order simultaneously throughout the battlefield. A movement to contact may be so successful that it immediately leads to an exploitation, or an attack may lead directly to pursuit. (FMFM 6)

        a.   **Movement to contact**. Movement to contact is an offensive operation conducted to develop and to establish or regain contact with the enemy. A properly executed movement to contact allows the commander to make initial contact with minimum forces and to expedite the employment and concentration of the force.

        b.   **Attacks.** The purpose of the attack is to defeat, destroy, or neutralize the enemy. An attack emphasizes maximum application of combat power, coupled with bold maneuver, shock effect in the assault, and prompt exploitation of success.

                (1)   *Hasty attack*. A hasty attack is an attack in which preparation time is traded for speed to exploit opportunity.

                (2)   *Deliberate attack*. A deliberate attack is a type of offensive action characterized by preplanned coordinated employment of firepower and maneuver to close with and destroy the enemy.

                (3)   *Spoiling attack*. Commanders normally mount spoiling attacks from a defensive position to disrupt an expected enemy attack. A spoiling attack attempts to strike the enemy while he is most vulnerable--during his preparations for the attack in assembly areas and attack positions or while he is on the move prior to crossing the line of departure.

                (4)   *Counter attack*. Commanders conduct counterattacks either with a reserve or otherwise uncommitted or lightly engaged forces. The counterattack is conducted after the enemy has commenced his attack, and a resolute defense or enemy tactical error exposes him to effective counteraction.

                (5)   *Feint*. A feint is a supporting effort designed to divert or distract the enemy's attention away from the main effort and involves physical contact with the enemy.

                (6)   *Reconnaissance in force*. A reconnaissance in force is always a deliberate attack by major forces to obtain information and to locate and test enemy disposition, strength and reactions.

                (7)   *Raid.* A raid is an offensive operation, usually small-scale, involving a penetration of hostile territory for a specific purpose other than seizing and holding terrain and for which there is always a planned withdrawal.

        c.   **Exploitation.** The enemy may still be capable of fielding cohesive units after being attacked. In the exploitation, the attacker extends the destruction of the defending force by maintaining constant offensive pressure.

        d.   **Pursuit**. When it becomes clear that organized enemy resistance has completely broken down, the commander shifts to the pursuit. The difference between an exploitation and a pursuit is the condition of the enemy. The object of a pursuit is annihilation of the enemy force.

2.   **OFFENSIVE FIRE SUPPORT PLANNING.** Infantry unit leaders plan and use both direct and indirect fires to suppress, isolate, obscure, neutralize, destroy, deceive, or disrupt enemy forces. For indirect fires, infantry battalions and companies normally conduct top-down fire support planning and send a target list to the platoons. Rifle platoon commanders review the indirect fire plan to determine the need for additional targets in their platoon's sector. If a need exists for additional targets, the platoon commander requests those targets be included in the company fire plan. The platoon commander, however, does not wait to receive the company fire plan. He begins fire planning as soon as possible and integrates his fire plan into the company fire plan when it arrives.

Indirect fires are normally planned to support all phases of offensive operations. Fires are typically planned to the front of the objective in order to cover the approach of the maneuver element; on the objective in order to support the assault; and to the flanks of and beyond the objective in order to pursue the enemy by fire, support physical pursuit of the enemy by the maneuver element and to disrupt enemy counterattack forces. Indirect fires are generally planned on known, suspected or likely enemy locations or avenues of approach.

3.   **COMMUNICATIONS.** The ability to communicate has always been a critical concern among units in combat. <u>Maneuver warfare's emphasis on decentralized execution increases the need for lateral communications among adjacent units</u>. Often, during tactical operations, the majority of communication is from senior to subordinate unit leaders, and vice-versa. For example, company commanders speak mostly to rifle platoon commanders, and rifle platoon commanders speak mostly to the company commander. <u>Greater emphasis should be placed on lateral communication between adjacent platoons or companies</u>. In today's operational environment, communication and coordination with adjacent units is critical. Communication between adjacent units facilitates coordination of actions and focuses initiative when unit leaders find it necessary to deviate from the original plan in order to achieve the commander's intent.

Aids to Communication	**Common Errors in Communications**
Habitually assigned radio operators. Use of brevity codes. Use of execution checklists. Alternate/redundant radio nets. "Actuals" talk to "actuals".	Unit leader not in proximity of radio. Poor cross training of Marines/knowledge of radios. Poor supervision of communicators (crypto-fills, correct frequencies, etc.). Poor security of KYK-13 and other classified equipment. Failure to "Op-check" or water proof equipment.

4.   **COMMAND ELEMENT - UNIT LEADER SURVIVABILITY.** During tactical operations, the unit leader must be able to control and direct his unit. A rifle platoon commander normally utilizes an enlisted radio operator with the company tactical net. He may utilize a squad radio for communication with the squad leaders, though this is entirely dependent upon the availability of squad radios (PRC-68) and the tactical situation. There is a natural tendency for radio operators, forward observers, the platoon sergeant and guide, etc., to congregate near the platoon commander. Clusters of Marines, visible antennas, individuals obviously reading maps, saluting, individuals pointing and giving directions, are all classic indicators of the presence of someone important, the unit leader! <u>This is a dangerous practice and will readily identify the unit leader's location to enemy observers and snipers</u>. It also violates the principle of dispersion and may result in the death or incapacitation of all or most of the key leaders from a single artillery round, grenade, or volley of fire. To counter this, always ensure that the unit leader blends in with the unit and is difficult for the enemy to identify. <u>THE COMMAND ELEMENT MUST NEVER BE EASILY RECOGNIZABLE AS A COMMAND ELEMENT</u>!

5.   **IMMEDIATE ACTION DRILLS.** Immediate action drills (IA drills), which are sometimes referred to as battle drills, are predetermined actions executed in response to commonly encountered combat situations. They provide a smooth transition from one activity to another; for example, from movement to contact to offensive action against an enemy force discovered to the immediate front of the friendly force. IA drills significantly enhance a unit's ability to quickly respond to a potentially dangerous situation. IA drills are normally limited to situations requiring instantaneous response, therefore, Marines must execute them instinctively and aggressively. This level of proficiency can only be attained through continual practice under a wide variety of

conditions. Characteristics of immediate action drills are:

     a.   They are standard responses to enemy actions or the unit leader's orders.

     b.   They are standard throughout the entire unit.

     c.   They are rehearsed and uniformly understood by each member of the unit.

     d.   They identify critical actions that leaders, individual Marines, and key weapons assets must perform instantly.

     e.   They are relatively uncomplicated, easy to comprehend and readily adaptable to changing environments.

6.   **UNIT SECURITY.** Historically, a unit leader never relinquishes control of two responsibilities: the navigation of his unit and its security. The mindset must be established early in a novice leader that he must continually assess the security requirements for his unit and ensure that they are adequately met. <u>The failure to do this will inevitably lead to defeat, loss of life, or both</u>. Security measures are normally grouped into two categories, active and passive. Several examples of both active and passive security measures on the platoon level are listed below:

<u>ACTIVE SECURITY MEASURES</u>	<u>PASSIVE SECURITY MEASURES</u>

Dispersion of units, individuals, crew-served weapons.
   Forward, flank, rear security, air sentinels.
   Intelligent use of formations and movement techniques.
   Positioning of individuals and weapons during halts.
   Prudent route selection (cover-concealment, danger
     areas, etc.).
   Immediate action drills and unit SOPs.
	Individual and equipment camouflage.
	Noise and light discipline.
	Use of proper radio procedures.
	Night vision devices.

7.   **LINKUP.** Linkups between two or more units often occur during infantry operations. They often occur in enemy controlled areas during infiltrations or when two units are directed to join forces for a subsequent operation, etc. Successful linkups depend on control, detailed planning, and stealth. The procedure described below is for use by platoon and company-sized units. Linkups depend upon detailed planning and coordination. The linkup plan or the unit SOP must address the following:

     Linkup site selection.   Control measures.
     Recognition signals.   Actions at the linkup point.
     Indirect fires.   Contingency plans.

     a.   <u>Site selection</u>. The linkup site should be easy to find during daylight or at night. Ideally, both a primary and an alternate site are selected. The site must have cover and concealment, and be off natural lines of drift. It must also be easy to defend for a short time and offer access and escape routes.

     b.   <u>Recognition signals</u>.   Far and near visual signals are required to keep friendly units from firing on each other. Although the units conducting the linkup exchange radio frequencies and call signs, the radio should be avoided as a means of recognition due to the threat of compromise. Visual and oral recognition signals must be planned.

     c.   <u>Indirect fires.</u> Ideally, indirect fires are available and should be planned. Indirect fires can support linkups by masking the noise of friendly units, and by distracting the enemy. Indirect fires are planned along the movement routes and at linkup sites in the event contact is made with the enemy. Restrictive fire lines (RFL) can help control fires around the linkup site. Commanders cannot fire across RFLs without coordination. Phaselines can serve as RFLs and can be adjusted as the two forces approach each other.

     d.   <u>Control measures</u>. Contact points, checkpoints, phaselines, infiltration lanes, movement routes, etc., are examples of standard control measures which may be used during linkups. <u>Most important are linkup points, which are the points</u>

on the ground where linkup forces expect to make initial contract.

      e.   Actions at the linkup point. This covers the exact sequence of actions at the linkup site. Each unit picks a small contact team which will go to the linkup point. Individual duties of the unit stay in the linkup rally point. Procedures for integrating the linkup rally point. Procedures for integrating the linkup units into a single linkup rally point are coordinated.

      f.   Contingency plans. The unit SOP for conducting a linkup normally considers the following contingencies:

      Enemy contact before linkup.
      Enemy contact during linkup.
      Enemy contact after linkup.
      How long to wait at the linkup site?
      What to do if some elements don't make it to the linkup?
      Alternate linkup points and rally points.

8.   **DEPARTURE - REENTRY FRIENDLY LINES**. Infantry units often conduct operations which require them to depart from or reenter through friendly lines. The considerations listed below are simply an example of the type and extent of coordination normally required.

      a.   Departure from friendly lines. When passing through a friendly unit, the leader must conduct a forward passage of lines. Key elements are:

      (1)   Coordinated lanes or routes through the forward unit area.

      (2)   Conduct initial coordination with the forward unit to confirm passage lanes or routes and exchange information.

      (3)   Complete the plan and move the unit to an assembly area at the rear of the forward unit.

      (4)   Make final coordination to exchange tactical information, confirm signals and contingency plans, and pick up guides, if required.

      (5)   Designate a rally point and issue a contingency plan for the contact.

      (6)   Move through the passage lane or route.

      b.   Reentry of friendly lines. When the leader returns to a friendly unit area, he conducts a rearward passage of lines. Key elements are:

      (1)   Select a tentative reentry point and make the initial coordination to exchange information. *

      (2)   During final coordination but before departure, finish plans for reentry with the friendly unit. *

      (3)   After completing the mission, move to a rally point short of the friendly unit.

      (4)   Make contact with the forward unit using a prearranged signal (either visual or radio).

      (5)   If contact is made, the friendly unit sends out a guide to lead the unit. If contact is not made, use the contingency plan made during final coordination.

      (6)   Move to an assembly area behind the friendly unit before halting. This deceives the enemy as to the forward unit's position.

      *Done prior to departing friendly lines.

      c.   Before both departure and reentry, the leader coordinates:

(1)	Mutual recognition and reply signals.	(5)	Guides, if needed.
(2)	Routes (primary and alternate).	(6)	Fire support plans.
(3)	Contact points and passage points.	(7)	Schemes of maneuver.
(4)	Contingency plans.		

9.   **CROSS TRAINING.**   One of the hallmarks of a well-trained unit is its ability to adapt to changing or unforeseen situations. At the rifle platoon level there is an obvious need for individual Marines to be proficient in a variety of infantry skills. Once an adequate level of proficiency is attained in routine infantry operations, the unit leader should cause the members of the unit to expand their knowledge and proficiency. Every Marine in a rifle platoon should know how to operate any weapon typically found at the platoon level. For example, while the importance of medium machine guns during an attack is obvious, often the majority of individual Marines within a rifle platoon are incapable of operating this weapon. During combat operations members of machine gun squads and teams are often killed or wounded. The success of an attack may hinge on the ability of the nearest Marine to retrieve the weapon, perform immediate action, if necessary, and continue the mission. This example is easily related to the use of radios, night vision equipment, global positioning system (GPS), land navigation, etc. The superior leader trains his Marines to a level where they can adapt to any situation and are capable of assuming the responsibilities of unit leaders who become casualties.